CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   A system for optimizing sourcing opportunity utilization policies comprising:

a sourcing opportunity utilization policies engine configured for providing sourcing opportunity utilization polices;

a cost/risk generator configured for computing sourcing performance by utilizing the sourcing opportunity utilization policies from the sourcing opportunity utilization policies engine; and

an optimization engine configured for comparing the sourcing performance from the cost/risk generator to at least one objective for business performance over time and across potential future circumstances to determine an optimal sourcing opportunity utilization policy.

2.   The system of claim 1 wherein the sourcing opportunity utilization policies engine is further configured to develop the sourcing opportunity utilization policies.

3.   The system of claim 1 wherein the sourcing opportunity utilization policy engine is further configured to allow revision to a set of feasible sourcing opportunity policies.

4.   The system of claim 1 wherein the optimization engine is further configured to allow revision to the at least one objective to further refine the optimal sourcing opportunity utilization policy.

5.   A method for optimizing sourcing opportunity utilization policies comprising:

receiving at least one objective for business performance over time and across potential future circumstances;

defining a set of feasible sourcing opportunity utilization policies;

utilizing the set of feasible sourcing opportunity utilization policies to perform sourcing performance analysis; and

evaluating sourcing performance analysis results to determine the optimal sourcing opportunity utilization policy.

6.   The method of claim 5 further comprising revising the set of feasible sourcing opportunity policies and performing sourcing performance analysis with the revised set of feasible sourcing opportunity utilization policies.

7.   The method of claim 5 further comprising revising the at least one objective for business performance over time and across potential future circumstances and performing sourcing performance analysis with the revised at least one objective.

8.   The method of claim 5 wherein the evaluating occurs in an optimization engine.

9.   The method of claim 5 wherein defining the set of feasible sourcing opportunity utilization policies further comprises utilizing a predefined sourcing opportunity utilization policy.

10.   The method of claim 5 wherein defining the set of feasible sourcing opportunity utilization policies further comprises providing a listing of key terms for sourcing opportunities from which a user may select.

11. The method of claim 5 wherein defining the set of feasible sourcing opportunity utilization policies further comprises identifying a range of prospective sourcing opportunities.

12. The method of claim 5 wherein defining the set of feasible sourcing opportunity utilization policies further comprises representing feasible sourcing opportunity utilization policies analytically.

13. The method of claim 5 wherein receiving at least one objective further comprises utilizing a predefined objective for business performance over time and across potential future circumstances.

14. The method of claim 5 wherein receiving at least one objective further comprises providing a listing of key terms for the at least one objective from which a user may select.

15. A machine readable medium having embodied thereon a program being executable by a machine to perform a method for optimizing sourcing opportunity utilization policies, the method comprising:

receiving at least one objective for business performance over time and across potential future circumstances;

defining a set of feasible sourcing opportunity utilization policies;

utilizing the set of feasible sourcing opportunity utilization policies to perform sourcing performance analysis; and

evaluating sourcing performance analysis results to determine the optimal sourcing opportunity utilization policy.

16. A system for optimizing sourcing opportunity utilization policies comprising:

means for receiving at least one objective for business performance over time and across potential future circumstances;

means for defining a set of feasible sourcing opportunity utilization policies;

means for utilizing the set of feasible sourcing opportunity utilization policies to perform sourcing performance analysis; and

means for evaluating sourcing performance analysis results to determine the optimal sourcing opportunity utilization policy.

17. A method for analytically representing sourcing opportunity utilization policies comprising:

representing specific individual sourcing opportunities for which specific values of all key terms are known;

representing estimated terms of indefinite individual sourcing opportunities for which specific values of one or more key terms are not known; and

representing sourcing opportunity utilization policies as a combination of the specific individual sourcing opportunities and indefinite individual sourcing opportunities.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein representing specific individual sourcing opportunities further comprises providing a listing of key terms for sourcing opportunities from which a user may select.

19. The method of claim 17 wherein representing estimated terms of indefinite individual sourcing opportunities further comprises providing a listing of key terms for sourcing opportunities from which a user may select.

20. A machine readable medium having embodied thereon a program being executable by a machine to perform a method for analytically representing sourcing opportunity utilization policies comprising:

representing specific individual sourcing opportunities for which specific values of all key terms are known;

representing estimated terms of indefinite individual sourcing opportunities for which specific values of one or more key terms are not known; and

representing sourcing opportunity utilization policies as a combination of the specific individual sourcing opportunities and indefinite individual sourcing opportunities.